



Winston H. Hickox
Agency Secretary,
Cal/EPA

State of California
California Environmental Protection Agency

Gray Davis
Governor



Air Resources Board | Department of Pesticide Regulation | Department of Toxic Substances Control
Integrated Waste Management Board | Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment | State Water Resources Control Board | Regional Water Quality Control Board

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Cal/EPA Employees

FROM: Winston H. Hickox
Agency Secretary *Winston H. Hickox*

DATE: March 29, 2002

SUBJECT: CAL/EPA'S COMMITMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

California has long been a pioneer in taking initiative to reduce environmental and public health risks posed by air and water pollution, solid and hazardous waste management, and pesticide application. In this tradition, our Golden State stands as one of the nation's leaders on the issue of environmental justice, being one of the first states in the Nation to have passed legislation to codify environmental justice in state statute; in fact, Governor Davis signed six bills related to environmental justice since 1999.

Cal/EPA is firmly committed to the achievement of environmental justice.
Environmental justice for all Californians is an Agency priority.

Accordingly, we must continue to seek opportunities to implement environmental justice principles, **especially those with a concerted, cross-media approach** to ensure the integration of environmental justice into all programs, policies, and activities within our Boards, Departments, and Office (BDOs).

Our environmental justice mission reflects the Agency's commitment to this issue:

"To accord the highest respect and value to every individual and community, the Cal/EPA and its BDOs shall conduct our public health and environmental protection programs, policies and activities in a manner that is designed to promote equality and afford fair treatment, full access and full protection to all Californians, including low income and minority populations."

The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption.
For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, check out www.flexyourpower.ca.gov.



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As I've stated before, "Protecting human health and the environment is a job that is never done" and indeed, the opportunities for analysis and action for environmental justice in California are varied and great. The goal of our mission will be attained when all Californians, regardless of race, culture, or income, enjoy the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to our decision-making processes.

Environmental justice is defined in statute as, "The fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies." (Government Code Section 65040.12)

Statute obligates the Agency and its BDOs to do the following:

- Conduct all programs, policies, and activities within Cal/EPA and its BDOs in a manner that ensures the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and income levels, including minority populations and low-income populations of the State;
- Promote enforcement of all health and environmental statutes within its jurisdiction in a manner that ensures the fair treatment of all Californians, irrespective of race, culture, and income;
- Ensure greater public participation from environmental justice stakeholders in the development, adoption, and implementation of environmental regulations and policies;
- Improve research and data collection for programs relating to the health and environment of people of all races, cultures, and income levels, including minority populations and low-income populations of the State.
- Identify among people of different socioeconomic classifications differential patterns of consumption of natural resources for our programs.

Clearly, there is no one simple solution to environmental injustice, but rather a host of existing procedural and programmatic tools available to address the issue. In order to achieve meaningful environmental justice, we should, as a procedural and practical matter:

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- Enhance our mechanisms for public involvement and input at all levels of the decision-making process to ensure early, accessible and meaningful participation of all stakeholders (e.g. fact sheets, availability of language translation, and enhanced public outreach);
- Invest in capacity development of all stakeholders, particularly those historically not engaged in the decision making process (e.g. technical assistance at the community level and leveraging of resources to support local environmental justice efforts);
- Explore opportunities to address environmental justice within current statutory and regulatory structures and identify any necessary changes or clarifications;
- Create partnerships with stakeholders in the environmental decision-making process, understanding that environmental justice requires a collaborative approach at all levels;
- Utilize research and proactive tools and approaches to environmental justice issues, such as cumulative impact analysis and pollution prevention to inform how we prioritize, develop, and implement our efforts to reduce and/or eliminate environmental pollution and deliver the benefits of environmental protection; and
- In light of our State's current economic situation, we must be more vigilant in ensuring environmental justice remains a priority and resources continue to be directed this key issue.

I have asked each of the Boards, Departments, and Office to incorporate environmental justice into their overall strategic plans. This has been accomplished and now we need to move forward in earnest to implement those plans. To assist in our efforts, there are a number of resources I recommend you become familiar with and take advantage of as follows:

- **The Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (IWG):** I chair, this Group along with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research Director, including all the heads of the Boards, Departments, and Office within Cal/EPA. The IWG is responsible for guiding programmatic and policy development related to environmental justice;

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- **The External Cal/EPA Advisory Committee on Environmental Justice:** This Committee is made up of various EJ stakeholders from community groups, environmental organizations, business, local/regional planning agencies, air districts, and Certified Unified Program Agencies to provide advice and consultation on environmental justice to Cal/EPA;
- **The Cal/EPA Environmental Justice Website**
(www.calepa.ca.gov/EnvJustice/): The website contains the most current information on environmental justice concerns including a Calendar of Events on environmental justice occurring throughout the State.
- **Cal/EPA Environmental Justice Fundamentals Training Program**
(<http://epanet/EnvJustice/training>): The training is offered at various times throughout the year to bring greater awareness of environmental justice issues within Cal/EPA.

Let's continue to work in this spirit to ensure environmental justice is not a series of paper exercises, but is a tangible goal attained for and by all Californians. The Assistant Secretary for Environmental Justice, Romel Pascual, and his staff are available to assist you. Mr. Pascual can be reached at (916) 324-8425 or via email at: rpascual@calepa.ca.gov.

I appreciate your continued support in this matter.